
DIGEST

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Willmott

HB No. 772

Abstract: Makes changes to the Health Professional Development Program. Eliminates nursing and other professionals from scholarship program. Creates a new board to administer scholarships awarded to promote primary care and dentistry in certain areas. Removes number of scholarships which must be granted by Dept. of Health and Hospitals (DHH) every year.

Present law provides for a Health Professional Development Program under DHH.

Present law defines certain terms including "health manpower shortage areas", "department", and "secretary".

Proposed law retains present law, but changes "health manpower shortage area" to "health professional shortage area" in order to be consistent with federal law.

Proposed law defines "rural area" as a location in the state which is outside a U.S. Census Place of 50,000 or more people and its adjacent and contiguous urbanized area. Defines "urban underserved area" as a location in the state which is inside a U.S. Census Place of 50,000 or more people and its adjacent and contiguous urbanized area and which is located in a designated health professional shortage area of appropriate type.

Proposed law narrows the program to increase the number of primary care practitioners and dentists in rural or urban underserved areas. Specifies that in order to be considered for the rural primary care scholarship the student must be from a rural area and in order to be considered for the urban underserved primary care scholarship the student must be from an urban underserved area. Further, specifies that the geographic eligibility will be determined by the primary care practitioner awards committee.

Present law requires that students be enrolled in a doctoral program offered at the La. State University Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC), an approved registered nursing program at a college or university, or an approved licensed practical nursing program at any public institution.

Proposed law specifies that it is the intent of the legislature to increase the number of primary care practitioners who practice in rural or urban underserved areas in the state.

Proposed law defines "primary care practitioner" as a medical practitioner who provides a basic level of health care and who is licensed to practice in the state in the health care areas of general

family medicine, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, general surgery, general obstetrics/gynecology, general medicine/pediatrics, or dentistry.

Proposed law eliminates the scholarship program for registered and licensed practical nursing and for students enrolled in a doctoral program at LSUHSC. Retains a scholarship program for students enrolled in a medical or dentistry program at LSUHSC. Proposed law changes present law to allow students enrolled in a medical or dentistry program at a professional school in La. to apply and receive a scholarship. Further requires students to come from a rural area or an underserved area and continuously participate in a rural primary care, general primary care, or dentistry track program within a La. medical or dental school.

Present law requires students to pursue an approved course of study and maintain an acceptable level of academic standing leading to a degree in medicine or dentistry.

Proposed law retains present law.

Present law requires students to agree in writing to serve in a health manpower shortage area classified by the U.S. Public Health Service for one year for each year of receiving the scholarship.

Proposed law repeals present law and specifies that the amount of the scholarship is equal to the lowest base tuition of a public medical school in the state.

Present law provides that failure of the student to serve in a health professional shortage area after graduation for an agreed upon time results in a substantial penalty. Further provides that DHH may determine the amount of the penalty.

Proposed law retains present law, but further provides that DHH may, through rulemaking, waive certain scholarship requirements "for hardship" or any other contractual obligation as deemed necessary to protect the state's investments and workforce policy goals. Also, specifies that the student must agree in writing to serve in a rural or urban underserved area one and one half years for each year of receiving the scholarship, not to exceed a total of five years of service.

Proposed law specifies that the student must be willing to agree in writing to accept Medicaid, Medicare, and uninsured patients during his service.

Present law specifies that DHH, subject to the availability of funds, provide enough scholarships for 10 registered nurses, 10 licensed practical nurses, and 10 physicians to specialize in family medicine, emergency medicine, pediatrics, medicine/pediatrics, or obstetrics/gynecology.

Proposed law eliminates the requirement to provide a certain number of scholarships in any given year.

Proposed law requires a student to continue to meet the minimum criteria as established in proposed law in order to maintain their scholarship.

Proposed law establishes a scholarship awards committee within DHH to review applications for scholarships and award them accordingly. Provides that the committee is comprised of the following persons or designee: the secretary of DHH, the chancellor of LSUHSC-New Orleans, the chancellor of LSUHSC-Shreveport, the dean of the Tulane School of Medicine, the dean of the LSU School of Dentistry, the speaker of the House, and the president of the Senate.

Proposed law creates the nursing scholarship program subject to the availability of funds. Further, establishes an awards committee to oversee the review and award of applications for nursing school scholarships. Also, provides for the composition of the committee.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 40:1300.1, 1300.2(2) and (4), 1300.3(A), 1300.4(B) and (C), and 1300.5(A) and (B); Adds R.S. 40:1300.2(5) and (6), 1300.5(C)-(H), and 1300.5.1)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Health and Welfare to the original bill.

1. Makes technical changes.
2. Deletes the definition of "reasonable related educational expenses" which means nontuition costs including fees, books, supplies, clinical travel, educational equipment, and materials, which do not exceed the school's estimated standard budget for educational expenses for the participant's degree program for the years of that participant's enrollment.
3. Adds the definition of "rural area" which means a location in the state which is outside a U.S. Census Place of 50,000 or more people and its adjacent and contiguous urbanized area.
4. Adds the definition of "urban underserved area" which means a location in the state which is inside a U.S. Census Place of 50,000 or more people and its adjacent and contiguous urbanized area and which is located in a designated health professional shortage area of appropriate type.
5. Changes the name of the scholarship program in present law to the primary care practitioner scholarship.
6. Provides a statement of legislative intent which specifies that it is the intent of the legislature to increase the number of primary care practitioners who practice in rural or urban underserved areas in the state.
7. Specifies that the intent of the scholarship program is to increase the number of primary care practitioners in rural and urban underserved areas. Changes the reference from underserved urban to urban underserved.
8. Adds the definition of "primary care practitioner" which means a medical practitioner who provides a basic level of health care and who is licensed to practice in the state in the health care areas of general family medicine, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, general surgery, general obstetrics/gynecology, general medicine/pediatrics, or dentistry.
9. Deletes the reference to other reasonable educational expenses.
10. Specifies that in order to be considered for the rural primary care scholarship the student must be from a rural area and in order to be considered for the urban underserved primary care scholarship the student must be from an urban underserved area. Further, specifies that the geographic eligibility will be determined by the

primary care practitioner awards committee.

11. Increases the length of time a student must agree, in writing, to serve in a rural or urban underserved area from one year to one and one half years for each year of receiving the scholarship, not to exceed a total of five years of service.
12. Adds a qualification that the student is willing to agree in writing to accept Medicaid, Medicare, and uninsured patients during his service.
13. Specifies that in order to maintain their scholarship a student must continue to meet the minimum criteria as established in proposed law.
14. Creates the nursing scholarship program subject to the availability of funds. Further, establishes an awards committee to oversee the review and award of applications for nursing school scholarships. Also, provides for the composition of the committee.